



NEWS FROM NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Contact: Jim Milbury/562-980-4006
Connie Barclay/301-713-2370

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NOAA Fisheries Service Seeks Comments on Sperm Whale Recovery Plan

NOAA's Fisheries Service announced the release of a draft Sperm Whale Recovery Plan for public review and comment in a notice published in today's Federal Register. A federal Recovery Plan is required when a species is listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

The goal of the plan is to promote actions necessary to eventually take the animals off the endangered species list. The public comment period ends September 5, 2006.

"I'm glad to see this draft recovery plan completed," said Dr. Bill Hogarth, NOAA Fisheries Service Director and United States Commissioner to the International Whaling Commission. "This plan should help to focus sperm whale recovery and monitoring efforts across the globe."

The sperm whale is one of the most wide-ranging animals in the world, inhabiting all the world's oceans. It was made famous by Herman Melville's "Moby Dick," and is readily identified by its large blunt head. The species was a favorite to whalers because of the reservoir of valuable oil in the whale's head known as spermaceti. The species was relentlessly targeted by the whaling industry, harvesting as many as a million animals between 1800 and 1987. An international moratorium was imposed by the International Whaling Commission (IWC) in 1987.

The Plan's strategy highlights nine actions that are important to the recovery of sperm whale populations in the North Atlantic, North Pacific and Southern Hemisphere oceans: (1) coordinate state, federal, and international actions to implement recovery efforts; (2) determine population discreteness and stock structure; (3) better estimate population size and monitor trends in abundance; (4) conduct risk analyses; (5) identify and protect important habitat; (6) identify causes and minimize the frequency and severity of human-caused injury and mortality; (7) determine and minimize any detrimental effects of human-generated noise in the oceans; (8) maximize efforts to acquire scientific information from dead, stranded, entangled or entrapped sperm whales; and (9) develop a post-delisting monitoring plan.

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A copy of today's federal register notice may be found at:
<http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20061800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2006/pdf/E6-10559.pdf>. Comments may be sent to by e-mail or mail. For e-mail, send to spermwhale.recoveryplan@noaa.gov, include in the subject line the following document identifier: Sperm Whale Recovery Plan. E-mail comments, with or without attachments, are limited to five megabytes. For mail, send to Angela Somma, Chief, Endangered Species Division, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD, 20910; Fax: (301) 427-2523. A copy of the Recovery Plan is available from the above address or on-line from <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/>.

NOAA Fisheries Service is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources and their habitat through scientific research, management and enforcement. NOAA Fisheries Service provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

NOAA, an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of the nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, over 60 countries and the European Commission to develop a global network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

NOAA : <http://www.noaa.gov>

NOAA Fisheries Service: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov>

Sperm Whale Recovery Plan: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr>

Federal Register Sperm Whale Notice:

<http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20061800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2006/pdf/E6-10559.pdf>

Sperm Whale Information:

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/mammals/cetaceans/spermwhales.htm>